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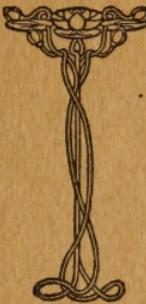
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# THE FLOATING ISLAND

By

WILLIAM STRODE

TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF THE  
AUTHOR, AND A REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY DRAMA  
IN ENGLAND, CHIEFLY AFTER THE YEAR 1600



PRESENTED IN THE FORM OF A THESIS TO THE  
FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF  
THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

By ERNEST GODFREY HOFFSTEN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

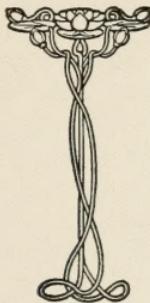


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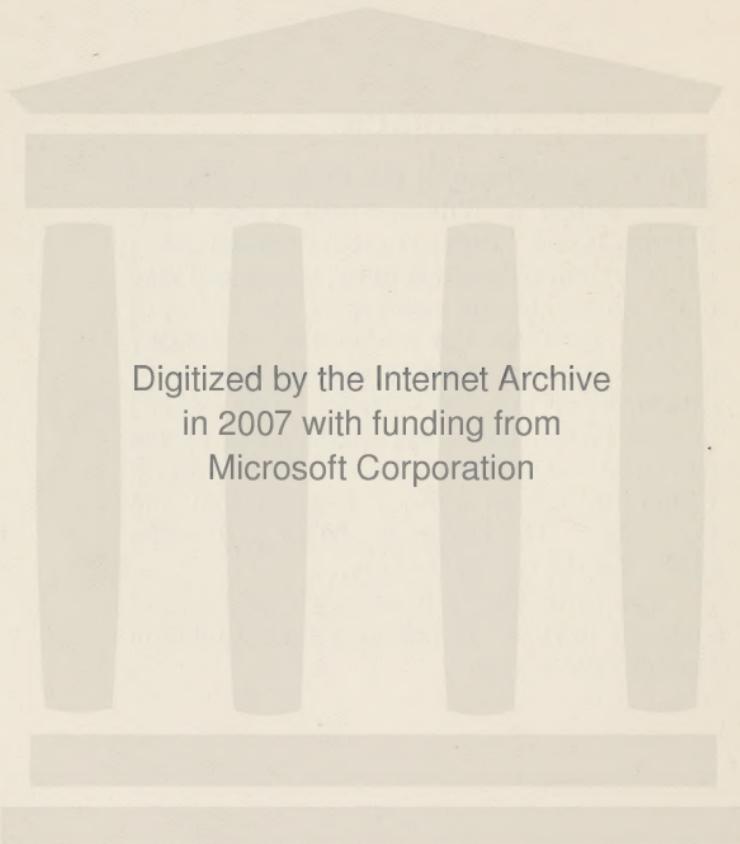
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## PREFACE

THE original scope of this thesis consisted of an edition of William Strode's play "The Floating Island," with an introduction and notes; but the recent publication of the poems and play of the author, in one volume, by Mr. Dobell of London, precludes the advisability of another edition. As emphasized so strongly in Dobell's edition, Strode is worth studying. Our especial interest in him lay in the consideration of the part he played in the development of the drama within the college walls, notably Oxford and Cambridge. The reader is referred to Dobell's edition for the text of the play.

The writer wishes to acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Dr. F. E. Schelling for his uniform kindness and advice.



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## PART I.

A GENERAL SKETCH OF THE UNIVERSITY DRAMA  
IN ENGLAND, SHOWING ITS DISTINCT  
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

## A GENERAL SKETCH OF THE UNIVERSITY DRAMA IN ENGLAND, SHOWING ITS DISTINCT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

The University Drama in England may be said to have had its inception in the year 1350, when the Latin play, "Ludus Filiorum Israelis," was presented at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge.<sup>1</sup> The greater number of plays that were presented at both Oxford and Cambridge before the reign of Queen Elizabeth were written in Latin. Playwriting appears to have been largely an exercise for the purpose of displaying a student's knowledge and mastery of the Latin tongue; in fact, Latin and playwriting went hand in hand as educational values. And it is therefore not surprising that Latin was upon every college man's lips. For example, in the play "Albumazar," presented at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the year 1614, there is a reference to the frequency of Latin usage indicated in the mention of English being spoken as a foreign language. The following lines reveal this fact:

"If't be a fault to speak this foreign language,  
(For Latin is our Mother tongue) I must entreat you  
To frame excuses for us; for whose sake  
We now speak English."<sup>2</sup>

Under such conditions it was but natural that the poet, John Skelton, in the reign of Henry VIII, should have been crowned at Oxford for certain Latin verses. This precedent, which was, indeed, the continuation of an old mediaeval custom, paved the way for the subsequent instance of a degree being conferred, in 1512, on one Edward Watson, upon condition that he write a Latin comedy.<sup>3</sup> The early University Drama was thus an expression to be made practical use of in an educational way.

It was but a step, in the line of didactic influences, for the University Drama to be affected by the allegorical elements in the school drama. The characteristics of the moral play

<sup>1</sup>Retrospective Review, Vol. 12—"The Latin plays acted before the University of Cambridge," by W. L. Courtney, London, 1825.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Dodsley's "Old English Plays," ed. Hazlitt; "Albumazar," in Vol. 11, London, 1876.

<sup>3</sup>F. E. Schelling, Elizabethan Drama, Vol. 2, p. 53.

are at once discernible in the play of "Narcissus," presented at St. John's College, Oxford, in the year 1602. In the play entitled, "Apollo's Shroving," acted 1626, "the enduring manner of the later moralities" is apparent. Says Dr. Ward: "The idea of the action, such as it is, consists in the conflict between the claims of Learning and the wiles of the Queen Hedone, practiced by the agency of the messenger, the sea-nymph Siren." This is an English play, and was composed for the scholars of the Free School of Hadleigh in Suffolk, and acted by them on Shrove Tuesday, February 6, 1626.<sup>1</sup> Strode's "The Floating Island," presented before King Charles, at Christ Church, Oxford, in the year 1636, was reported "too full of *morality* to please the court."<sup>2</sup>

From its very nature, and because of the counter dramatic influences of the school drama to which it was naturally susceptible, the University Drama became at once limited in its appeal to the public mind. It was just as much, if not more, of an occasional character as were the plays at court.

The University Drama, does, however, reveal a distinct growth. While the subject matter of the plays, written before the year 1600, was of little or no interest to the public, those plays which were composed after this date, and, in fact, up to the time of the Restoration, exhibit rather a wide range of subject matter and diversity of treatment. The elements of satire, especially of a strongly personal tone, came to be used frequently and attracted the attention of the public mind to the life in the colleges. The numerous allusions in the three famous Parnassus Plays were bound to attract the eye of an interested public.<sup>3</sup> These plays "contain several passages in outspoken criticism of poets and dramatists of the day, thus affording us an excellent example of the academic attitude toward the new popular literature that luxuriated beyond the college walls."<sup>4</sup>

The interest thus manifested in popular literature reacted upon the college playwright and made him susceptible to its influences. In 1614, "Sicelides, a Piscatory," because of its pastoral qualities, may point to a Spenserian influence upon its

<sup>1</sup>Ward: History of English Dram. Lit., London and New York, 1899. Vol. 3, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Halliwell: Dict. of Old Plays, p. 98.

<sup>3</sup>"The Pilgrimage to Parnassus with the Two Parts of the Return from Parnassus." —Ed. from Ms. by the Rev. W. D. Macray, M. A., F. S. A. Oxford, 1886.

<sup>4</sup>Schelling—*ibid.*, Vol. 2, 68.

author, Phineas Fletcher. "The Jealous Lovers," of Thomas Randolph, presented at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the year 1631, was probably suggested by Jonson's "Cynthia's Revels." The evidence is to be found in the name "Asotus" and a few other touches.<sup>1</sup>

What was the impetus that urged on the dramatic activity at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge after the year 1600? A hasty survey of the Elizabethan period will show that the literature of this period was popular, and not courtly or academical. The universities were not encouraged by the leading literary lights of the time. Spenser, Raleigh and Bacon, though each was a University man, did not, in their writings, reflect college inspirations. The popular rather than academic circles claimed them. Approaching the year 1600, however, we find that "not only were popular plays on the London stage again and again performed at Court and at the Universities, but that the reflex influences of the court drama and the masque—even of the narrowly academic plays of Oxford and Cambridge—upon the popular stage, while less easily traceable in concrete example, can not but have been appreciably strong."<sup>2</sup> Several of Shakespeare's plays were acted at Oxford on the visits of his company to the seat of the University, during the early years of the reign of King James.<sup>3</sup> In Shirley's "The Witty Fair One," in Act IV, Scene II, the character "Freed" is made to say: "What makes so many scholars then come from Oxford and Cambridge, like market-women with dossers full of lamentable tragedies, and ridiculous comedy, which they might here vent to the players, but they will take no money for them."

There was thus a marked counter-influence between the popular and the academic plays after the year 1600. The process of assimilation, too, among the few University play-wrights was still going on. Furthermore, the general tendency of the age was exerting its influence upon their work. Changes that became characteristic of the literary conception and treatment in England, after 1600, were having their effect. An attitude of criticism was one of these changes, and became at

<sup>1</sup>W. Carew Hazlitt: *The Poetical and Dramatic Works of Thomas Randolph*, 2 vols., London 1875, Introduction. Dr. Schelling regards this as an overstatement, and suggests that "The Jealous Lovers" was worked up on a hint from Ben Jonson.

<sup>2</sup>Schelling, *ibid.*, Vol. 2, 51.

<sup>3</sup>Halliwell-Phillips Outlines. Ed. 1898. 1, 214 *et seq.*

once evident in "the rhetorical note characteristic of the tragic and comic drama" of the early seventeenth century. This critical view of things found part of its vent in the satirical elements of the University drama.

The classics still exerted a potent influence in the university plays. The imitation of Plautus and Terence was an early practice of the scholars in the university, which, indeed, was highly instrumental to the growth and improvement of the drama.<sup>1</sup> In the play entitled, "Lingua", acted at Trinity, Cambridge, in 1616 or 1620, the characters refer to classic authors as though contemporary with them. Evidently, this was due to extensive erudition in the classics. Themes of academic plays were taken mostly from Greek and Roman mythology, and the various anachronisms and absurdities arising from the method of treatment contributed to heighten the amusement of the spectators.<sup>2</sup>

The university drama was no less open to Italian influence, concerning which Ward says: "The most direct traces of its influence upon the English drama of this period (after 1600) are probably to be sought for in the academical plays."<sup>3</sup> The play "Albumazar", by John Tomkis, presented at Trinity, Cambridge in the year 1614, is said to be a close imitation of "L'Astrologo", an Italian comedy by G. B. della Porta, printed in Venice, in the year 1606. George Ruggles' "Ignoramus", presented at the same college during the same year was, probably, likewise, inspired by G. B. Porta's "La Trappolaria."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these definite influences upon college dramatic literature, there sprang up, during the early part of the seventeenth century, a real and growing interest in the universities. The Bodleian Library at Oxford, while it had nothing to do directly with this, did more than patronage to promote learning.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Laud's chancellorship of eleven years at Oxford, beginning in the year 1630, brought about many beneficial reforms within the colleges. Royal sanction and approval of college life and college plays became at once evident in the rather frequent visits of royalty to the seats of

<sup>1</sup> Retrospective Review, Vol. 12.

<sup>2</sup> "Narcissus", ed. Margaret L. Lee, London, 1898; Introduction.

<sup>3</sup> Ward; Hist. of English Lit. Vol. 3, p. 265.

<sup>4</sup> Ward, ibid. Vol. 3, p. 186.

<sup>5</sup> Broderick, "A Hist. of the University of Oxford" N. Y., p. 96.

learning. Queen Elizabeth visited Oxford on two occasions, in 1566 and in 1592. James visited Oxford in 1605, and Cambridge in 1614. Charles paid two visits to Oxford, in 1629 and in 1636. Upon the occasion of his latter visit two plays were presented at Christ Church, Strode's "The Floating Island", and Cartwright's "The Royal Slave".

From these influences, partly of an intellectual and partly of a disciplinary nature, it becomes at once evident that the universities of Cambridge and Oxford had entered upon a new lease of life in the early seventeenth century. "More English plays were acted at Oxford in three years than are recorded for the whole of Queen Elizabeth's reign."<sup>1</sup> The university drama reflects, in consequence, a broader and more attractive side than it had ever done before.

<sup>1</sup>Schelling, *ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 90.

## PART II.

THE LIFE AND ASSOCIATIONS OF WILLIAM STRODE

## THE LIFE AND ASSOCIATIONS OF WILLIAM STRODE.

William Strode, the author of "The Floating Island," was a Devonshire man. He was born near Plympton in the year 1602; but the exact date is not to be found in the records. He was an only son, and his father was a Philip Strode, who had married one Wilmot Hanton. There is some reason to consider the family of Strode of gentle birth, since it is supposed that Sir Richard Strode of Newnham, Devonshire, was the uncle of William.<sup>1</sup> Confusion however is very probable in tracing such a descent, for, through the latter half of the sixteenth century and all of the seventeenth, there are to be found in the matriculation register of Oxford<sup>2</sup> no less than thirty-five students bearing the name Strode. Ten of these are known to be from Devonshire; and there are seven who bear the name William, of whom three are Devonshire men.

William Strode secured a King's scholarship at Westminster School, and was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1617.<sup>3</sup> He did not matriculate, however, until June 1, 1621, at the age of nineteen. From all accounts, Strode was a very active student at Christ Church. It required but five months for him to secure his bachelor's degree, receiving it on December 6th of the year 1621.<sup>4</sup> His master's degree was granted on June 17, 1624.<sup>5</sup> Strode's continued career of activity and usefulness at Oxford secured for him the highest degree in the clerical profession, namely, the B. D., on December 10, 1631,<sup>6</sup> and the D. D., on July 6, 1638.<sup>7</sup> It appears that Strode married a daughter of Dr. Simpson, Prebendary of Canterbury, by whom he had an only daughter, who became the wife of Henry Langley, Master of Arts, of Wadham College.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Account of the life of William Strode, in the Dict. of Nat. Biog.

<sup>2</sup>Alumni Oxoniensis—the Matriculation Register of the University of Oxford—ed. Joseph Foster—Oxford and London, 1891.

<sup>3</sup>Three general references have been consulted for the facts in Strode's career, namely: Dict. of Nat. Biog.; "Fasti Oxoniensis," Vol. 1, and "Athenae Oxoniensis," Vol. 2, by Anthony A. Wood, London, 1691, 2 vols. (a new edition by Philip Bliss, London, 1817.)

<sup>4</sup>"Fasti," Vol. 1, 839.

<sup>5</sup>"Fasti," Vol. 1, 847.

<sup>6</sup>"Fasti," Vol. 1, 870.

<sup>7</sup>"Fasti," Vol. 1, 894.

<sup>8</sup>Dobell, "Poetical Works of Wm. Strode."—Intr. XXIII.

Strode was connected with Christ Church the greater part of his career, and appears to have resided at Oxford during his entire life as a faithful servant of his *Alma Mater*. The service that he rendered was in the successive holding of several offices of college importance. In 1629 he was appointed Proctor, *apropos* of which event it is of interest to note the following decree of King Charles: "It must now be observed that whereas the elections of Proctors had hitherto been made by public canvassing, it pleased the King's Majesty to make them private and domestick." A cycle of revolution in the office, referred to as the *Caroline Cycle*, was also established at this time. Strode, and Thomas Atkinson of St. John's College, were presented to their offices in convocation, on April the fifteenth.<sup>1</sup> Strode also enjoyed the distinction of the office of Public Orator of the University, receiving his appointment in this same year, 1629. Two years later he became a Reader, and in the year 1638, he was appointed Canon of Christ Church.<sup>2</sup> In addition to holding these University offices, Strode was appointed, in 1633, to the rectory at East Bradenham;<sup>3</sup> in 1638, he became Vicar of Blackbourton, Oxfordshire. From 1639 to 1642 he was Vicar of Badby, Northamptonshire. Strode also served Bishop Corbet as chaplain, just before the Bishop's death, in 1635.

William Strode was, indeed, an enthusiastic Oxford man. His career at the university fell in troublous times. England, at large, was sorely vexed over two problems of a very serious nature: namely, the question of enforcing the decree of uniformity in religious worship, and the privilege of the King in levying taxes. Both of these matters were of vital moment to the people; their liberty of thought and action was at once challenged. The University of Oxford reflected fully the pulses of these times. "If it had played a humbler part in the earlier stages of the Reformation than in the intellectual movement of the Renaissance—it was, nevertheless, destined to bear the brunt of the storms which, already gathering in the last years of Elizabeth, burst over Church and State in the first half of the seventeenth century."<sup>4</sup> Religious controversies

<sup>1</sup>"*Fasti*," 1, 864.

<sup>2</sup>"*Athenæ Oxoniensis*."

<sup>3</sup>Strode, apparently, continued to reside at Oxford.—*Dict. Nat. Biog.* "William Strode."

<sup>4</sup>*A Hist. of the Univ. of Oxford*, Broderick, N. Y., p. 100.

filled the air, and political and religious sentiment at the universities was divided. The Act of Uniformity was strictly enforced at Oxford, under the chancellorship of Laud, who held this position from 1630 to 1641.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, a strong opposition at once manifested itself in the "deep undercurrent of Puritanism—among the more earnest college tutors and students."<sup>2</sup> When we consider, further, that the university, even at this time, was a training school for the clerical profession, rather than for the general world, bitter religious discussions among the students were a most natural outcome of such a condition. And it is altogether probable that Strode plunged into these controversies, as a student, with much the same zest that is evident in his later years in "*The Floating Island*," in which the Puritans were the butt of his censure and ridicule.

One of the chief sources of Puritanic displeasure lay in the play-writing and acting among the students of the universities. The amusements of the period lacked refinement, and the prevalent forms of sport included bull-baiting and bear-baiting. These diversions called forth a decree from James I, forbidding them, and games of chance as well, within five miles of a town or university. Latin and English plays, often of doubtful propriety were a source of much of the university pleasures; and, indeed, much ill feeling arose out of the grossness and personalities expressed in them. These plays were produced within the college walls and some especially satirical and otherwise objectionable, usually written in Latin, were performed in the inns of the city.<sup>3</sup> The performers in these divers college plays were masters of arts, bachelors and undergraduates. In the matter of selection there was no apparent distinction as to rank. Students, preparing themselves for a clerical career, seem to have enjoyed this form of recreation as much as the lay student. As a result they exposed themselves to censure of no mild type. In his "*Apology for Smectymnuus*," Milton voices a severely Puritanic opposition to them. The scathing criticism in the following extract was a direct blow at university plays, and especially at the students indulging in them who were to become ministers of the gospel. The quotation reads: "When in the colleges so many of the young

<sup>1</sup>Broderick, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Broderick, p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>"*Student Life and Customs:*" H. D. Sheldon, Ph. D., N. Y. 1901, p. 38-39.

divines, and those in next aptitude to divinity, have been seen so often upon the stage, writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antic and dishonest jestures of Trinculoes, buffoons, and bawds; prostituting the shame of that ministry, which either they had or were nigh having, to the eye of courtiers and court ladies, with their grooms and mademoiselles. There, while they acted and overacted among other young scholars I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools; they made sport, and I laughed; they mispronounced, and I disliked; and to make up the atticism, they were out, and I hissed. Judge now whether so many good textmen were not sufficient to instruct me of false beards and vizards, without more expositors: and how can this confuter take the face to object to me the seeing of that which his reverend prelates allow, and incite their young disciples to act? For if it be unlawful to sit and behold a mercenary comedian personating that which is least unseemly for a hireling to do, how much more blameful is it to endure the sight of as vile things acted by persons either entered, or presently to enter into the ministry: and how much more foul and ignominious for them to be the actors."<sup>1</sup>

As scathing as this criticism was, it did not act as a damper upon the ardor of the college playwrights and actors. It may have impressed and influenced a divinity student here and there, but of this there appears to be no record. The extract, however, may serve in some measure to indicate that student life in the universities was not on a very high moral plane. This laxity of morals was a matter of no small anxiety to the Puritan majority in Parliament during the early years of the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> Even during the strict rule of Laud's chancellorship at Oxford, excessive drinking was no unusual practice among the students. In 1639, Laud was exercising his best endeavors to place them under the ban. "The scholars (not excepting the seniors) had been hunted out of alehouses and taverns by the vice-chancellor and proctors constant walking."<sup>3</sup> Yet it was no easy matter to break down a custom that had long since established itself in the student life. Drinking bouts have, it seems, ever been

<sup>1</sup>"*The Prose Works of John Milton.*"—ed. J. A. of St. John, London (Bohn), Vol. 3, pp. 114-115.

<sup>2</sup>Sheldon, p 38.

<sup>3</sup>Broderick, p. 117.

characteristic of certain groups of university men in all ages. In spite of the fact that so much trouble and turmoil arose over certain revelries at the inn, called the "Swyndlestock," at Oxford, on February 10, 1355—called "St. Scholastica's Day"—the custom still prevailed at Oxford.

Soon after he was elected chancellor, Laud instituted a series of reforms. Attendance at sermons and services was insisted upon; the proper relations between Masters of Art and Bachelors or students were established; the use of Latin in conversation as well as in formal business was ordered. And by regulating the forms and fashions of academical costume, the proper length of scholars' hair, and the hours for meals, these rules of Laud provoked much resentment at his policy. The undergraduates were treated like schoolboys, and as such, seemed to delight in annoying their instructors and setting the authorities at defiance.<sup>1</sup> Objectionable as these reforms were among the student body, they, nevertheless, had a healthy influence upon the life in the University. The evidence of this manifested itself in the growing popularity of Oxford during Laud's chancellorship. In the year 1611, there were reported 2420 enrolled students. In the year 1638, this number had increased to 4000.<sup>2</sup> Anthony A. Wood claimed that this was due to the administration of Laud, who ceased to preside in 1641.

The influences of these progressive changes at Oxford must have been felt by our author, William Strode. He was a thorough-going Oxford man, and was well-known within its college walls. Wood describes Strode as "a person of great parts, a pithy ostentatious preacher, an exquisite orator, and an eminent poet." He is referred to as "this renowned wit" in an advertisement of his play, "The Floating Island," in Phillip's "World of Words," 1658. The fame of Strode rests upon his occasional verse, which is of a lyrical and sportive nature. The recent publication of the complete work of Strode by Mr. Dobell is, indeed, a tribute to the poetic genius

<sup>1</sup>Broderick, p. 110; Sheldon, p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Broderick, p. 116.

of the poet. The following poem, entitled, "In Commendation of Music," reveals the lyric power of Strode:

When whispering straynes doe softly steale  
With creeping passion through the hart,  
And when at every touch wee feele  
Our pulses beate and beare a part;  
When thredds can make  
A hartstring shake  
Philosophie  
Can scarce deny  
The soule consists of harmony.

When unto heavenly joy wee feyne  
Whatere the soule affecteth most,  
Which onely thus wee can explayne  
By musick of the winged hoast,  
Whose layes wee think  
Make starres to winke,  
Philosophie  
Can scarce deny  
Our soules consist of harmony.

O lull me, lull me, charming ayre,  
My senses rock with wonder sweete;  
Like snowe on wooll thy fallings are,  
Soft, like a spiritts, are thy feete:  
Greife who need feare  
That hath an eare?  
Down lett him lye  
And slumbering dye,  
And change his soule for harmony.<sup>1</sup>

Strode's literary activity was not very great; nor was it centred upon those forms of composition that appealed to the popular demand. In addition to the comparatively few poems attributed to him, Strode was the author of various sermons, three of whose themes are:—"Sermon Concerning Swearing;" "Sermon Concerning Death and the Resurrection;" "Sermon at a Visitation held at Linn in Norfolk," June 24, 1633. This last named sermon was preached at the desire of Dr. Richard Corbet, Bishop of Norwich. There are also a few orations, speeches and epistles attributed to Strode. The most interesting composition of Strode's, however, was his play, "The Floating Island." This is his most pretentious work, and as

<sup>1</sup>This poem is taken from Dobell's edition of Strode's works; and the editor takes occasion to remark, that the few lyrics left us by Strode are enough "to assure him a permanent place beside Herrick, Carew, Randolph, and Waller."—cf. Intro. p. 20.

such makes its appeal to students of literature; and this appeal lies in its historic setting and background, not in its intrinsic value as a work of dramatic art.

In August, 1636, King Charles and Queen Henrietta visited Oxford. Strode welcomed them at the gate of Christ Church with a Latin Oration.<sup>1</sup> This visit was of three day's duration, and was attended by the usual ceremonies, chief among which was the presentation of plays.<sup>2</sup> "The Floating Island" was performed before the King at Christ Church on August 29th. It appears that the play was purposely written at the request of the dean and chapter. "It contained too much morality to suit the taste of the court; yet it pleased the King so well, that he soon after bestowed a canon's dignity on the author."<sup>3</sup> Cartwright's "The Royal Slave" was also presented before the King on the day following.

Strode's attitude toward play-writing is interesting in this connection. In the preface, "To The Reader," there is an apologetic tone, expressive of Strode's disinclination toward the writing of plays. "He wrote it at the instance of those who might command him; else he had scarce condescended to a Play, his serious thoughts being filled with notions of deeper consideration." Ostensibly, the play was an attack on Puritanism, and was written to please the King and curry the favor of an Anglican audience. Indeed, it might well be considered an expression of Oxford's attitude in the existing religious controversies. Certainly, it had the approval and sanction of the university authorities, since Strode, himself, filled an official position.

The attack on Prynne is evident in parts of the play, especially in Act I, Sc. II.—where the line occurs :

"My Eares are questioned. Locks which I have severe'd.  
Must hide my eare Stumps."

The part of the Puritan is played by the character, "Melancholico," who declaims against the innocent pleasures of the anti-Puritans. Prynne's "Histrio Mastix," published in 1633, evidently called forth much of the ridicule in the play. The notoriety which this, so-called, "Players' Scourge" provoked made it particularly fitting that such a play as "The Floating Island" should be presented before the abused party.

<sup>1</sup>Dic. of Nat. Biog.—"William Strode."

<sup>2</sup>Broderick, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Halliwell, Dict. of Old Plays, p 98.

In order to appreciate the historic value of this play, therefore, it is necessary to know of its probable inspiration, "Histro Mastix," which is regarded as "the last great expression of the Puritan version."<sup>1</sup>

In the annals of literature Strode does not receive much mention. His small contributions to literature were short-lived and soon forgotten. He is better known as a loyal son of Oxford, whom he served all his life. And during his career such men as John Prideaux, Sir Nathaniel Brent, Gilbert Sheldon, Brian Dappa, Samuel Fell and Juxon filled the headships of colleges.<sup>2</sup> To one not intimately acquainted with the history of Oxford, such an array of names means little. The great English divine, Hammond, lived at Christ Church, Strode's college; "Seldon was acting as burgess for the University; and Brian Twyne was amassing those antiquarian stores which supplied the most valuable materials for the marvelous industry of Anthony Wood."<sup>3</sup>

The men with whom Strode's name is associated in one way or another, were many of them noted. Richard Corbet, whom Strode served as chaplain, was Bishop of Oxford, and, afterwards, of Norwich. Wood says of him that, in his young days, he was "esteemed one of the most celebrated wits in the University, as his poems, jests, romantic fancies, and exploits, which he made and performed extempore, shew'd." Ben Jonson was always on intimate terms with Corbet, and repeatedly stayed with him at the deanery of Christ Church.<sup>4</sup> The influence that Dr. Corbet exerted upon Strode was, undoubtedly, of anti-puritanical force. He frequently admonished his clergy for so-called "Puritan fanatics."

In the lay world Strode had a good friend in the person of Sir John Hele, (or, Hale) who represented Exeter in Parliament from 1592 to 1601. He was appointed Queen's Serjeant, May 16, 1602; and was knighted at the beginning of the reign of King James. Strode dedicated "The Floating Island" to Hale, as his patron.

Two noted musical composers of the time were among the acquaintances of Strode. Henry Lawes, who set some of

<sup>1</sup>"The Controversy between The Puritans and The Stage," a Yale Thesis, by Dr. E. N. S. Thompson, New York, 1903, chap. 15. p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Broderick: p. 119.

<sup>3</sup>Broderick: p. 119.

<sup>4</sup>Dict. of Nat. Biog: "Richard Corbet."

Strode's poems to music, as well as the airs and songs in "The Floating Island," was on familiar terms with the best literary men of the day. Lawes, himself had a strong literary instinct. The first edition of "Comus" was published, we are told, without Milton's name, only that of Lawes appearing in the dedication.<sup>1</sup> Lawes also set to music the songs in Cartwright's "The Royal Slave."

Richard Gibbs, the organist of Christ Church in Norwich, also set some of Strode's poems to music, among which the poem to be sung on Good Friday is spoken of as being particularly good.<sup>2</sup>

On March 10, 1644, Strode died. His body "was buried in the the Divinity Chappel, that is the isle most northward from the choir, belonging to the Cathedral of Christ Church in Oxoniensis."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dict. of Nat. Biog.: "Henry Lawes."

<sup>2</sup>Dict. Nat. Biog.: Art. on Strode.

<sup>3</sup>Athenæ Oxon., Vol. 2, p. 85.

### PART III.

THE ALLUSIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY DRAMA AND  
THE FLOATING ISLAND.

## THE ALLUSIONS IN THE UNIVERSITY DRAMA AND THE FLOATING ISLAND.

The varied range and diversity of subject matter, the manner of treatment, and the elements of allusion embodied in certain college plays afford a study of absorbing interest. After all, the university drama is not so far removed from the popular drama in its inherent qualities. The dramatic inspiration is largely akin in both types. However, the style of play written by Jonson and his school seems to have exerted the greatest influence, of all the popular influences, upon the university drama. Jonson's moral plays, in their wealth of allusion, may undoubtedly be considered the type upon which many of the college plays are based.

The chief and perhaps most interesting value, historically at least, to be attached to these plays is that of allusion. Theories concerning the drama, for example, are to be found. In Edward's "Damon and Pythias," the prologue contains the following noteworthy lines:

"In comedies the greatest skill is this, rightly to touch  
All things to the quick; and eke to frame each person so,  
That by his common talk you may his nature rightly know."<sup>1</sup>

Considering the early date, 1565, of the presentation of this play, this allusion becomes more interesting. Evidence of theories is likewise to be found in the criticism of the popular drama and poetry in plays written and presented after the year 1600, of which more anon.

The passages of allusion in the University Drama arrange themselves into four distinct classes: (*a*) Reflection of college life. (*b*) Criticism of and references to popular literature of the time. (*c*) Relation between the university and the townsmen. (*d*) Political and social allusions.

(*a*) The student spirit is well brought out in the play of "Narcissus," where the character "Francis Clark," in a speech in behalf of the Freshmen, begs for mercy and pity upon them. The poverty of students is reflected in the Parnassus plays, and likewise the custom of tutoring, drinking-bouts, and doffing of hats. "The Christmas Prince" is an

<sup>1</sup>Hazlitt, Old English Plays, Vol. 4.

expression of the mirth and festivities of the students at Christmas time and Candlemas day.<sup>1</sup> The play entitled "Techno-gamia or the Marriage of the Arts," presented at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1618, discloses the subjects studied at the university.<sup>2</sup> In "Lingua," act 2, scene 5, the character "Mendacio" is referred to as "Master Register," probably for the purpose of setting him up as a target for the thrusts of students at University authority.

(b) Probably no better source of scholarly criticism of contemporary literature can be found than that contained in many of the college plays. The prologue of "Narcissus" refers in the following lines to the strolling players:

"Wee are noe vagabones, we are no arrant  
Rogues that doe runne with plaies about the country."

The character "Luxur" in the Parnassus plays ridicules the twelve-foot blank verse; comments on dialectal spelling; and the character "Igen" alludes to the custom of pamphleteering and the easy susceptibility to print in those times. The actors Tarleton, Burbage, and Kempe are referred to in these plays, likewise the euphuist, Lylly. In the play "Albumazar," act 2, scene 1, there is a burlesque on the speech of Hieronimo in "The Spanish Tragedy," in the lines beginning:

"O lips, no lips—"

"Lingua" contains the following criticism of sonnetteers, act 2, scene 2.

"Were it not that I pity the multitude of printers, these sonnet-mongers should starve for conceits for all Phantastes. But these puling lovers—I cannot but laugh at them and their encomiums of their mistress. They make, forsooth, her hair of gold, her eyes of diamond, her cheeks of roses, her lips of rubies, her teeth of pearl, and her whole body of ivory."

The prologue of "The Royal Slave" alludes to the custom of mercenary inspiration among popular dramatists, in the lines:

"So none must cry up booty, or cry down;  
Such mercenary guise fits not the gown."

\* \* \* \* \*

"No traffique then; applause or hisse elsewhere  
May pass as ware, 'tis only judgement here."

<sup>1</sup>Retrospective Rev. XII.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, 8, p. 177.

(c) The relations between the Universities and the townsmen have ever been a source of annoyance in college towns. Oxford and Cambridge had their share of troubles that grew out of the opposition of the authorities to the pranks of the students. The play "Club Law," acted at Clare Hall, Cambridge, in 1599, may be cited as a play wherein the mayor and burgess are lampooned. In this particular case the allusion in the play was based upon a quarrel between Dr. John Jegon, the vice-chancellor, and the mayor over a matter of precedent.<sup>1</sup>

In the play "Ignoramus," the character "John Lack-latin" is intended "as a satire on the barbarous ignorance and equally barbarous phraseology of a pettifogger who can talk neither Latin, nor French, nor good King's English."<sup>2</sup> And in this same play, the ridicule of professors of common law, with their so-called "Dog Latin," is at once apparent in the chief character of the play.

(d) The evidences of allusion already pointed out indicate that it was an established custom in the majority of the University plays, in English at least, since the death of Elizabeth. The place that "The Floating Island" occupies in this classification is under the head of political and social allusion. The play was presented before a royal audience and at Oxford, the strong-hold of Anglicanism. It is small wonder then, that the play was ostensibly written to please the King by subjecting the Puritans to ridicule and by thus revealing Oxford's loyalty to the King.

The Puritans are represented in the character of "Melancholico;" "Sir Amorous," a courtly Knight, is the enemy of the Puritans; and King Charles, himself, may be considered the prototype of "Prudentius," the king. The story of the play is concerned with the rebellion of certain dissatisfied subjects who desire license and absolute freedom of all passions. "Amorous" stirs up revolt among his fellows "Audax," "Irato," "Desperato" and "Hilario," and they resolve to depose their king. The character "Phancy" is proclaimed queen, and she grants the malcontents what they desire. Many opportunities are thus afforded "Melancholico," who complains of the prosperity of the wicked. He, however,

<sup>1</sup>Mullinger, Hist. of Cambridge, p. 137

<sup>2</sup>Ward III, p. 186.

marries the "lustful daughter of Amorous," named "Concupiscence," obviously for the purpose of confining his reforms to her.

"Queen Phancy" rules for a while. A masque is introduced in the play and there is much levity. Finally "Phancy" exclaims:

"I am preplexed beyond my power of bearing.  
My arm is lopt, my kingdom is all tumult  
The passions taking advantage of my law,  
Follow their humours to their mutual ruine;  
And run like vessels till they quite run out."<sup>1</sup>

The deposed "Prudentius" is recalled and once more assumes the royal seat, and the passions as a result of their own excesses are calmed.

To all intents and purposes, the character "Prudentius" represents King Charles; "Intellectus Agens", his minister, Laud; while the conspirators can be none other than the opponents of the royal party.<sup>2</sup>

Considered as an individual expression of ridicule against the Puritans, "The Floating Island" does not count for much. Interest in it, however, increases when its place in the long controversy between the Puritans and the Royalists is fixed. It was one of the last expressions in the dramatists' reply to the attacks of the Puritans.<sup>3</sup> In his Thesis on the controversy between the Puritans and the Stage, Dr. Thompson has traced its history from the Martin-Mar-Prelate Controversy up to its close, about the year, 1640. The Martin-Mar-Prelate controversy gave the first opportunity for the pen of the playwright, in the satirical attacks upon the Puritans; which attacks were continued by Jonson, Dekker, Middleton, Brome, Cartwright, Mayne, and Randolph. In the plays written by these dramatists, satirizing the Puritans, the characteristic traits of the sect were subjected to much ridicule and lampooning. The serious look, the general deportment, the nasal twang, the plain garments and close-cut hair, the abstention from popular fads, the aversion toward smoking and profanity, the religious demonstration and habit of scriptural quota-

<sup>1</sup>Act 4, scene 13.

<sup>2</sup>Dobell, Intro. 40.

<sup>3</sup>E. N. S. Thompson, Ph. D., "The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage;" N. Y., 1903, p. 247.

tion ;—all are made the basis of bitter invectives.<sup>1</sup> Strode undoubtedly profited by the wealth of this satiric allusion ; although he by no means attacks the Puritans in the clever fashion of the popular dramatists. Spontaneity was lacking in the spirit of Strode's attack ; for he sought rather to flatter the opponents of Puritanism on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen.

<sup>1</sup>Thompson, pp. 211-14.

## PART IV.

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<sup>1</sup>This bibliography was prepared for the Thesis in its original form, which, in addition to the matter here presented, included a reprint of the play, “The Floating Island.”

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